

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PORG, EAID, DM
SUBJ: BENIN: SPECIAL MISSION ON COMPENSATION FOR MERCENARY
ATTACK

1. UNITED NATIONS UNDER SECRETARY FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS
ABDUL RAHIM FARAH INVITED CHIEFS OF RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC
MISSIONS TO A BRIEFING JANUARY 23 ON RESULTS OF HIS CONTACTS
WITH GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB). FARAH
EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD COME TO COTONOU UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM
THE UN SECGEN TO CONSULT WITH GPRB ON ALLOCATION OF \$28
MILLION WHICH THE U.N. HAD AGREED TO SEEK AS SPECIAL CONTRIB-
UTION FROM MEMBER STATES. MONEY WAS INTENDED TO COMPENSATE
BENIN FOR LOSSES SUSTAINED AS A RESULT OF JAN 16, 1977
"AGGRESSION". FARAH SAID THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD BE
CONTACTING UN MEMBER STATES NO LATER THAN FEB 15 SEEKING FURTHER
SUPPORT, WHICH WOULD GIVEN ON A BILATERAL BASIS TO BENINESE
GOVERNMENT. THE SECGEN IS TO MAKE A PROGRESS REPORT TO THE UN
BY SEPTEMBER 1978 ON STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

2. FARAH EXPLAINED THAT FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF THE TEAM OF
ASSESSORS IN JULY 1977 IT HAD BEEN DETERMINED THAT BENIN HAD
SUSTAINED APPROXIMATELY DOLS 18 MILLION WORTH OF LOSSES IN THE
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AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, PRIMARILY FROM DIVERTING HUMAN RESOURCES
AWAY FROM PRODUCTION. REMAINING DOLS 10 MILLION PRESUMABLY FOR
HUMAN AND MATERIAL LOSSES. OF APPROXIMATELY DOLS 18 MILLION
BENIN WAS SEEKING \$15 MILLION IN CASH CONTRIBUTIONS AND \$3.4
MILLION IN ASSISTANCE IN KIND, E.G., RICE, MAIZE, SUGAR, ETC.
FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS WOULD BE DEVOTED TO 12 PROJECTS CONTAINED
IN THE STILL UNPUBLISHED THREE-YEAR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

THESE PROJECTS INCLUDE IRRIGATION WORKS, MECHANIZATION OF FARMS, VILLAGE WATER, ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMS, SILO BUILDING AND PROTECTION AGAINST RODENTS AND INSECTS. FARAH EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ALL UN MEMBERS WOULD SHOW SYMPATHY FOR BENIN'S SUFFERINGS.

3. COMMENT: FARAH CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY SINCE BENINESE AMBASSADOR TO U.N. BOYA AND HIS COUNSELOR HOUNGAVOU WERE BOTH PRESENT DURING SESSION. VISIT, IN VIEW OF WESTERN OBSERVERS PRESENT AT MEETING, REPRESENTED VICTORY FOR BENIN IN DRAWING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO MERCENARY ATTACK AND EXPLOITING IT FOR GAIN. WHILE MOST OF BENIN'S AGRICULTURAL LOSSES STEM FROM COMBINATION OF MISGUIDED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND LACK OF RAIN, MERCENARY ATTACK PROVIDED CONVENIENT MEANS OF DISGUIISING GPRB'S POOR PLANNING.

4. GENERAL FEELING WAS THAT \$28 MILLION IS EXHORBITANT FIGURE BUT, AS BENIN IS ONE OF WORLD'S 25 POOREST COUNTRIES AND A VICTIM OF MERCENARY ATTACK, MANY UN MEMBERS FOR POLITICAL REASONS COULD NOT VOTE AGAINST THE FUND RAISING EFFORT. WE EXPECT BENIN TO BEGIN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN OF SEEKING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE WITH ARGUMENT BASED ON UNSTATED PREMISE THAT THOSE UNWILLING TO COMPENSATE BENIN FOR ITS LOSSES ARE IN EFFECT ALIGNING THEMSELVES WITH THE FORCES OF "IMPERIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM" RESPONSIBLE FOR THE JANUARY 16 AGGRESSION.

THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

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